

Fall 2009

Caroliniana Columns - Fall 2009

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UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES RECEIVE MAJOR GRANT TO DIGITIZE HISTORIC SOUTH CAROLINA NEWSPAPERS

BY CRAIG KEENEY

In November 2008, Kate Boyd, digital collections librarian for University Libraries, and I submitted a grant proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) National Digital Newspaper Project (NDNP) to scan and deliver to the Library of Congress an estimated 100,000 pages of historic S.C. newspapers on microfilm spanning the years 1860 to 1922.

In June 2009, NEH officials notified us that they had accepted our proposal and they would fund the project in full (\$350,033). During the next two years, the South Carolina Digital Newspaper Project (SCDNP) will digitize almost two dozen newspapers reflecting South Carolina's regional and racial diversity. They include the *Anderson Intelligencer*, *Charleston Daily News*, *Columbia Phoenix*, *Edgefield Advertiser*, *Keowee Courier*, *Newberry Herald and News*, *Orangeburg Free Citizen*, and (Sumter) *Watchman & Southron*. The papers will be searchable through the *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers* Web site hosted by the Library of Congress.

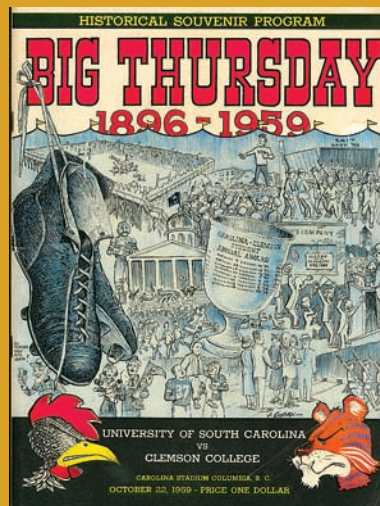


Kate Boyd and Craig Keeney

FIRST STEPS

Getting the project off the ground has made for a busy few months. In August, project manager Santi Thompson and I attended the annual NDNP conference in Washington, D.C. We learned first-hand about the successes and obstacles encountered by other participating institutions and met with program officials at the NEH and the Library of Congress. Several weeks later, the SCDNP advisory board members met in the South Caroliniana

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Big Thursday

This souvenir program from the final Big Thursday game, which was played on October 22, 1959, depicts historic moments of the rivalry between the Carolina and Clemson football teams. For decades the annual Carolina-Clemson football game had been held at the State Fairgrounds in Columbia, which essentially gave Carolina home-field advantage every year. Clemson coach Frank Howard had tried for years to change the arrangement. He and Carolina coach Rex Enright finally negotiated the end of tradition, to the dismay of many Carolina and Clemson fans. Beginning in 1960, the teams alternated playing at each other's home fields. Efforts have been made periodically to revive the tradition.



NEWSPAPERS *Continued from page 1*

Library to discuss the overall project and to select titles for digitization. Thompson and his assistants, Ashley Knox and Virginia Pierce, are currently recording technical information about each reel of microfilm. The project staff are also in the process of retaining the services of a vendor to produce digital files. I will be responsible for updating the newspaper records in the local catalog and writing descriptive notes for each newspaper that will also be included on the Chronicling America Web site.

At present, South Carolina is one of only five Southern states partnering with the NDNF (the others are Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and Virginia). S.C. newspapers will likely start to appear on the Chronicling America Web site in fall 2010. To search the site, please see: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>.

BUILDING ON THE PAST

This project builds on previous efforts to describe, preserve, and enhance access to S.C. newspapers.

In 1988, the University of South Carolina Press published *South Carolina Newspapers*, an authoritative county-by-county survey of newspapers compiled and edited by Dr. John Hammond Moore. In the early 1990s, the South Caroliniana Library, under Dr. Allen Stokes' supervision, cataloged 1,249 titles and filmed 990,332 pages with support from the NEH United States Newspaper Project.

The project also capitalizes on the Digital Activities Center's experience in digitizing manuscripts collections like the William Drayton Rutherford Papers, 1859–1894, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of South Carolina, and hard copy issues of the *New South*, a newspaper published in Port Royal by Union Army soldiers between 1862 and 1866. (Please see: www.sc.edu/library/digital/collections/newsouth.html.)

—Craig Keeney is cataloger for the Published Materials Division of South Caroliniana Library.

The News and Herald was published in Winnsboro. A subscription cost "\$3.00 a year, in advance."

The Free Citizen was an African American newspaper edited and published by E.A. Webster in Orangeburg in the 1870s. Its subtitle reads: "A Weekly Paper Devoted to Temperance, Literature and Politics."

The Anderson Intelligencer was published by E.B. Murray & Co. in the late 1800s.

The Columbia Phoenix was published at the end of the Civil War. William Gilmore Simms was deeply involved with the paper, which printed his accounts of the burning of Columbia in 1865. Later that year, Simms compiled these accounts into a pamphlet, *Sack and Destruction of the City of Columbia, S.C.* A reprint of the pamphlet with an explanatory introduction by David Aiken was published by USC Press in 2005 under the title *A City Laid Waste: The Capture, Sack, and Destruction of the City of Columbia*.

The Charleston Free Press was an African American–owned Reconstruction-era newspaper.

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY ROBERT K. ACKERMAN

I hope that all have had a good summer. We of the University South Caroliniana Society can be reassured that the society and the South Caroliniana Library are progressing well, the recession notwithstanding. The fact that a recognized scholar and academic leader, Dr. Drew Faust, president of Harvard University, served as our annual meeting speaker, and that her presence was an indication of her appreciation for the quality of our excellent staff and collections, should serve to strengthen our resolve to support the library through our service in donating materials and funds.

All of us are increasingly indebted to Harvey Teal for his valuable work in acquiring materials for the library. Through his long association with the library and his keen interest in the state's history, he has acquired the knowledge and means of identifying potentially valuable materials and has then assisted Allen Stokes and his colleagues in bringing in many additions to the collection. Har-

vey can serve as a model for all of us. Although our long absence from the state has limited my own knowledge of possible "finds," I am beginning to become aware of some materials of possible value to the library. I appeal to the membership to be alert to important papers currently residing in some neglected attics.

I again appeal to all to consider additional financial gifts to the library and to consider the library in estate planning. Even modest bequests can be of lasting value in furthering the library's progress. The repeated reductions in state appropriations to the University make private support for good causes increasingly important.

I am pleased to announce that the speaker at our 74th annual meeting, on Saturday, April 24, 2010, will be Dr. John McCardell, president emeritus of Middlebury College in Vermont. In 2009, LSU Press published *In the Cause of Liberty: How the Civil War Redefined American Ideals*. The volume was edited by John McCardell and William Cooper.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR



Society members enjoy the annual meeting reception in the library.

BY ALLEN STOKES

The University South Caroliniana Society celebrated its 73rd annual meeting on May 9, 2009, with more than 160 members and guests attending the reception at the South Caroliniana Library and luncheon at Capstone Conference Center.

Society President Dr. Robert K. Ackerman presided at the luncheon and business meeting. Ackerman gave special recognition to retiring members of the Executive Council: Vice President Simmons Tate and councillors Frank Beattie and William Schmidt. The membership elected as vice president Columbia attorney Kenneth Childs and as councillors, Columbia businessman William L. Cain Jr. and Tom Moore Craig, a retired Spartanburg educator and author. Also recognized were donors of collections: Harriet Sinkler Little, Harry S. Mustard III, Mr. and Mrs. James Ardrey, and Dr. and Mrs. Edmund R. Taylor.

The society was honored to have Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust, president of Harvard University, as the speaker on this occasion. In her address, Faust reflected on death and the American Civil War. Her most recent book, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, includes many citations to collections that she has consulted in the South Caroliniana Library. Faust first visited the Caroliniana in the 1970s when conducting research for her doctoral dissertation, which was published as *A Sacred Circle: The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840–1860* by the Johns Hopkins University Press in 1977. Faust returned to the Caroliniana on several occasions for research on her biography, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery*, which was published by LSU Press in 1982.

"STORED IN SAFETY"

One of the missions of the South Caroliniana Library is to preserve our state's documentary record through preservation microfilming. A title on which we have been working is the *Southern Christian Advocate*. The library was featured on the front cover of the April 25, 1940, issue. The occasion was the celebration of the building's 100th anniversary. This was also the year when the general collection was moved to the newly constructed McKissick Library and the original 1840 library building was named the South Caroliniana Library.

The speaker at the society's annual meeting that year was Dr. Francis Pendleton Gaines, president of Washington and Lee University. Gaines reminded his audience that "In this bank there will be stored in safety the hard-won accumulations of our own people, their legacies of courage and enterprise and achieved wisdom, bequeathed to us for our enjoyment and for our enriching

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Shown, left to right, are Henry Fulmer, head of the Manuscripts Division; Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust, president of Harvard University; and Dr. Allen Stokes, director of the library.

are indeed “stored in safety” in secure environments and have been consulted by USC faculty and students and by researchers from far beyond the borders of South Carolina.

One such researcher who visited the library this summer as the Lewis P. Jones Summer Research Fellow was Robert Elder, a doctoral student in history at Emory University. Upon his return to Emory, he wrote: “The Caroliniana is such a rich repository of material for my project, and it proved to be a wonderful place to think. I came away from this summer with a more defined and deeper conceptual grasp of my whole project, and I feel ready to sit down and write.... While the Jones fellowship was instrumental in getting me to Columbia for the summer, the true value of the fellowship is the folks who stand behind it.”

The South Caroliniana Library is one of the nation’s premier collections for studying the history of the American South, and past and present members of the University South Caroliniana Society have played a vital role in developing this collection through gifts of materials and funds for acquiring materials. The staff of the South Caroliniana Library is grateful for this magnificent support.

utilization. These assets are not to be hoarded, not to be frozen. On the contrary, they are to be available ... to all who have aptitudes and energies for their use.”

In subsequent years we have broadened the scope of our collecting to be more inclusive of all elements of our society. Our collections

INTRODUCING BILL COSSEN

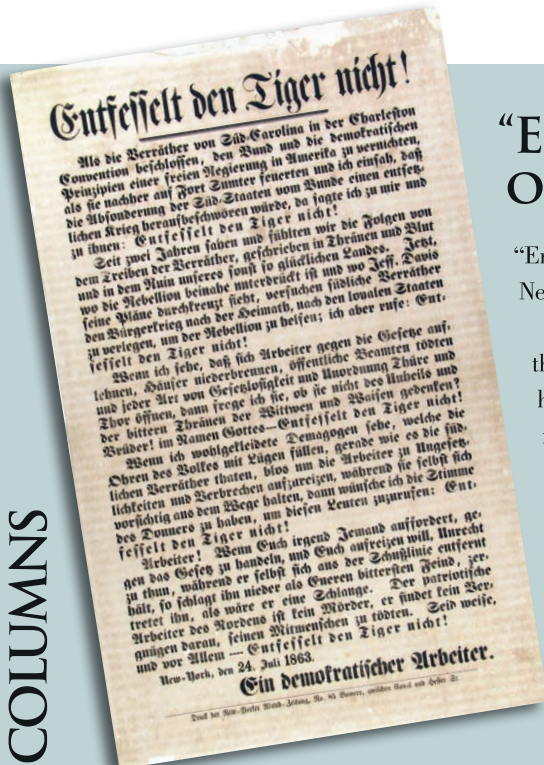


Bill Cossen

Bill Cossen is a new full-time staff member in the South Caroliniana Library’s Published Materials Division. Bill graduated from Emory University in 2008 with a B.A. in history and political science. While in Atlanta, he served as a research services assistant in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare

Book Library, where he located files and manuscripts, shelved collections, and helped process new collections. During his college years he also served on the executive boards of several campus organizations. Bill oversaw several fund-raising drives for charities such as a Food for Finals Festival for hurricane relief and a pool tournament to benefit children’s cystic fibrosis research.

Bill has worked as a legal assistant for a lawyer assisting patrons and organizing legal documents and correspondence, as well as providing office clerical support, which included setting up the office’s computer system. He served as a summer intern in two government offices, working with the public while gaining more skills with technological support systems for office management. Sometime in the future, Bill plans to enroll in graduate school in history, and he sees his new position in a preeminent university library as an opportunity to gain scholarly research experience that will be exceptionally valuable to his professional pursuits.



“ENTFESSELT DEN TIGER NICHT!” OR, “DO NOT UNCHAIN THE TIGER”

“Entfesselt den Tiger nicht!,” or “Do Not Unchain the Tiger,” is a German-language broadside printed in New York City on July 24, 1863, and owned by the South Caroliniana Library’s Manuscripts Division.

It is signed “Ein demokratischer Arbeiter,” or “A Democratic Worker,” and was issued at the time of the draft riots in New York City. The opening paragraph reads, “Whereas the traitors of South Carolina have decided in the Charleston Convention to destroy the alliance and the democratic principles of a free government in America, whereas they have fired upon Fort Sumter, and I realized that the separation of the Southern States from the Union would stir up a terrible war, I, therefore, said to myself and to them: Do Not Unchain the Tiger!”

The broadside further urges workers to refrain from being roused to “lawlessness and acts of impiety” by “well-dressed demagogues” who “safely stand aside in the bylines.” “Workers! If anyone attempts to influence you against the law and seeks to stir you up to act unlawfully, while he himself stands far away from the line of battle, go ahead and knock him down as your bitterest enemy, destroy him, as if he were a snake. The patriotic worker of the North is no murderer, he finds no satisfaction in killing his fellow man. Be wise, and before all—Do Not Unchain the Tiger!”

SOUTH CAROLINA CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS CAMP PAPERS

AVAILABLE TO RESEARCHERS

BY CRAIG KEENEY

Several years ago, the South Caroliniana Library's Published Materials Division acquired a collection of more than 60 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp papers on microfiche published in South Carolina between 1934 and 1941. All but two titles were new to the division's holdings. The collection has recently been made available to researchers, and the titles are all searchable in the library's online catalog. The collection documents 39 camps, four of which were composed entirely of African American men, established between South Carolina's Lowcountry and Upstate regions. It also includes a paper, titled *South Tyger River News*, that was created by a different government program, Soil Erosion Service Project No. 5 in Spartanburg.

The CCC, popularly known as "Roosevelt's Tree Army," was first established as Emergency Conservation Work in March 1933 to employ single young men in conservation and public works projects (the agency later relaxed requirements to allow veterans of the First World War and the Spanish-American War to enlist). The U.S. Army managed and supplied the camps. Enlistees served for six months at a time. They built bridges, campgrounds, fire roads, and fire towers and also fought forest fires and planted billions of trees. In exchange, they received a salary, vocational training, and, as circumstances allowed, more formal educational opportunities. The federal government never officially discontinued the CCC but rather withheld funding for it after 1941.

In the course of its existence, the CCC spent \$47,285,499 and employed more than 30,000 young men in South Carolina. As historian Jack Hayes (2001) has noted, it also "taught them lessons of cleanliness and safety that carried over into private life, and most of all it taught them respect for one another and for life itself" (p. 55).

The camp papers range in content from human interest stories and coverage of individual and team sports to lessons in hygiene and safety and notices of class offerings. They provided enlistees with a creative avenue to practice their typing and writing skills. Furthermore, they both reflected and symbolized the esprit de corps within the camps.

For a list of all the camps represented in the collection, please go to the online catalog (<http://libcat.csd.sc.edu>) and search by authors "Civilian Conservation Corps (U.S.)" and "United States—Soil Conservation Service—Project No. 5."

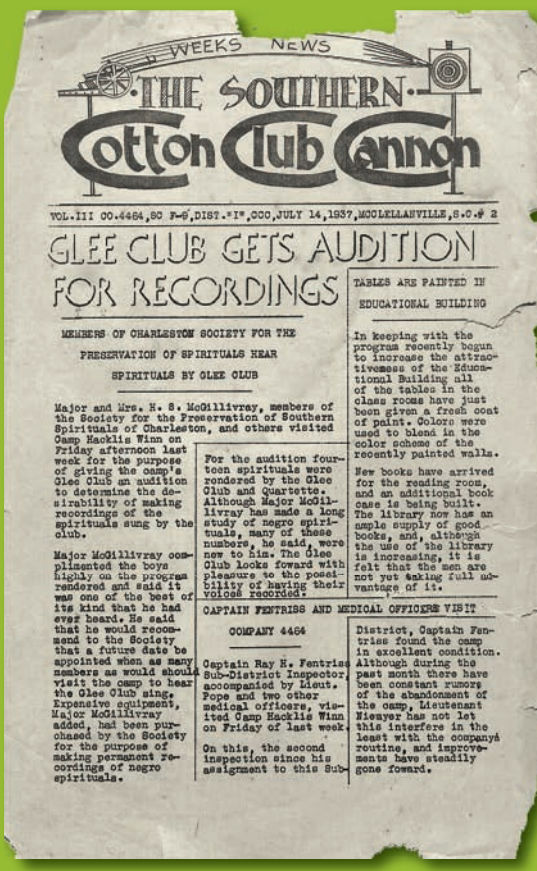
References:

Hayes Jr., Jack Irby. *South Carolina and the New Deal*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2001.

"Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)." Finding aid at the National Archives and Records Administration, www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/035.html#35.1 (accessed Oct. 1, 2009).

Waller, Robert A. "Happy Days and the Civilian Conservation Corps in South Carolina, 1933–1942." *The Historian* 64, no. 1 (fall 2001): [39]–61.

The *Southern Cotton Club Cannon* was published by CCC Company 4464-C, an all-African American camp in McClellanville, S.C. An article on this page shows interaction between the CCC camp and the Charleston-based Society for the Preservation of Spirituals, some of whose sound recordings are owned by the library.





THE DIARY OF

John Shaw Billings

BY MILES S. RICHARDS

Among the many treasures in the South Caroliniana Library's manuscript collection is an important primary source, the voluminous personal diary of John Shaw Billings (1898–1975), who was managing editor of both *Time* and *Life* magazines in the 1940s and 1950s. The diarist was born in South Carolina and was the great-grandson of James Henry Hammond, the eminent S.C. politician of the antebellum era.

Apparently, Billings first began to keep a diary in 1910, while in prep school in New York, but these early entries were sketchy and sporadic. He began the serious and systematic recording of events during his senior year at Harvard University, declaring: "This diary is written with but one reader in mind—myself. I shall strive to record the truth; to mark down my daily emotions; to employ only strong, clear language ... to write for myself a diary that all the world might read." Subsequently, he routinely wrote his thoughts daily, eventually producing a set of 69 bound volumes and ending the endeavor only about a year before his death. A friend once remarked to me that Billings was the "Samuel Pepys of the 20th century in the United States."

In 1920, Billings was hired as a reporter for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* at \$30 per week. Ten months later he was assigned to that newspaper's Washington bureau. Accordingly, Billings' diaries routinely described, in lively prose, the notable political personalities, as well as the major

historic events of the period. This practice continued when he became national affairs editor of *Time* in 1929. During the next quarter-century, Billings rose steadily within the editorial hierarchy of Time Inc. When he retired in May 1954, Billings was the editorial director of all the corporation's publications. Only Henry R. Luce, the editor in chief, had more authority.

REDCLIFFE PLANTATION

In 1935, Billings' aunt, Julia Hammond Richards, died, leaving Redcliffe Plantation, the Hammond ancestral home at Beech Island, S.C., without an occupant. Being the most affluent Hammond descendant, Billings quickly agreed to purchase the plantation and over the next two decades spent a considerable personal fortune renovating the entire property, especially the mansion. Upon his retirement, Billings moved permanently to Redcliffe. He continued to maintain his daily journal for a number of years, but on June 22, 1974, he finally wrote: "At this point, I have decided to stop the day-to-day recording of events (Besides I've lost all my 'notes' for this week). At 76 my hand writing is growing worse and worse and worse—and more and more the stuff I record can be 'covered' by 'routine.' I have kept this diary assiduously since 1910. Now, I bid it a fond farewell." Fourteen months after writing those words, on August 25, 1975, Billings passed away. He bequeathed Redcliffe Plantation to the state of South Carolina for use as a state park.



John Shaw Billings in the library at Redcliffe



John Shaw and Frederica Billings at Redcliffe in the 1930s



Frederica Billings with Runsy, the dog

BILLINGS' GIFTS TO THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

In 1973, Billings presented the diaries and his professional papers from Time Inc. to the University of South Carolina. Billings had departed before it became mandatory for all of the corporation's retiring executives to deposit business files in the corporate archives in New York. Consequently, the South Caroliniana Library possesses, outside of New York, the most complete collection of early internal Time Inc. documents in existence. Billings also gave the University his extensive personal correspondence, as well as numerous scrapbooks, monographs, pictures, and his desk. Noteworthy items include a photo from Billings' retirement party with signatures of about 50 Time-Life staff who had worked with him over the years and the advance proof copy of the review Billings wrote for George Orwell's *1984*.

The University Libraries' Moving Image Research Collection owns home movies made during the restoration of Redcliffe in the 1930s. The first endowment received by the Thomas Cooper Library, which was dedicated in 1976, was the John Shaw Billings Library Endowment, a bequest from the writer's estate. Funds generated by this endowment have provided for the acquisition of significant materials for the University Libraries.

An ongoing project to digitize items from the Billings photograph albums is being undertaken by the Libraries' Digital Activities Center. Please see www.sc.edu/library/digital/collections/jsb.html.

"EVER THE NONCONFORMIST"

For his abundant generosity, Billings was granted an honorary Doctor of Laws degree (LLD) from the University of South Carolina. Not surprisingly, the crusty diarist declined to attend the actual ceremony on May 11, 1974, his 76th birthday. As he noted, "LLDs are as common as pig tracks..." Even in his last years, Billings was ever the nonconformist.

—Miles S. Richards holds a doctorate in history from the University and has served as an adjunct professor of history in Continuing Education and Conferences.



Map of Redcliffe



Redcliffe Plantation



The parlor at Redcliffe



Site of Joanduschkee Village.
as seen from our Camp.

Oscar Montgomery Lieber

AND THE 1860 ECLIPSE EXPEDITION

BY GRAHAM DUNCAN

Born in Boston in 1830, Oscar Lieber was the eldest son of German-born political scientist and professor Francis Lieber. He moved to Columbia in 1835 when his father accepted a teaching position at South Carolina College, the present-day University of South Carolina. In 1839, Oscar Lieber traveled to Hamburg, where he attended private schools for the next six years. He returned to the United States briefly in 1846 and assisted Michael Tuomey with a geological and agricultural survey of South Carolina. The following year found him back in Germany, where he would remain until 1850, studying at universities in Berlin and Göttingen and the School of Mines in Freiberg.

During the next five years, from 1850 to 1855, Lieber held a number of positions, including assistant to the state geologist of Mississippi, and again served as Tuomey's assistant, this time while the latter was working on a geological survey of Alabama. In December 1855, the General Assembly of South Carolina passed a resolution authorizing a new four-year geological survey of the state and elected Lieber "Geological, Mineralogical and Agricultural Surveyor." The majority of the four annual reports published by Lieber between 1857

and 1860 were devoted to the exploration and development of potential mining areas in the S.C. Upcountry.

1860 ECLIPSE EXPEDITION

Lieber was left without a job when the legislature decided to discontinue appropriations for the survey in 1859. However, within the year he would secure passage aboard the U.S.C.S. *Bibb* and undertake a two-month journey to the northern coast of Labrador.

On June 15, 1860, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution authorizing the U.S. Coast Survey to furnish a vessel for the transportation "of astronomers, not exceeding five in number, and their assistants" to "the most suitable point on the eastern coast of this continent for observing the total eclipse of the sun, which will occur on the eighteenth day of July next." According to the report submitted by Stephen Alexander—astronomer in charge of the expedition and professor of astronomy at Princeton University—to the superintendent of the U.S. Coast Survey, "the northern extremity of Aulezavik island" on the northern coast of Labrador was chosen as it was "very nearly in the path of the central eclipse."



Daguerreotype of Oscar Lieber c. 1860

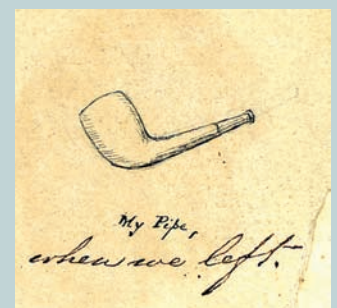
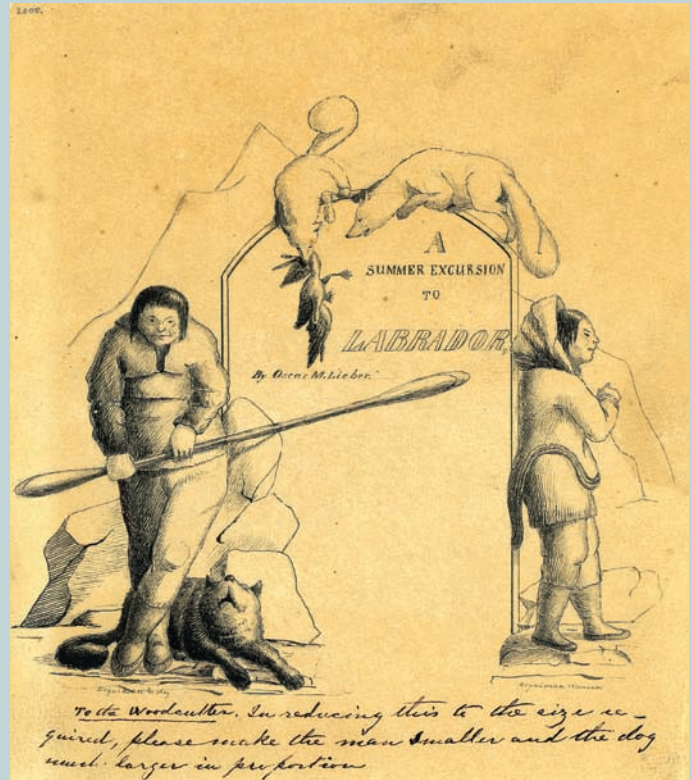
The U.S.C.S *Bibb*, a 150-foot side-wheel steamer commanded by Lieutenant Alexander Murray, left New York City on June 28 and arrived at its final destination on the coast of Labrador on July 13. After spending 11 days observing the eclipse and exploring the surrounding islands and inlets, the expedition departed Labrador on July 24 and arrived in Newport, R.I., on August 7.

"WINTER IN MIDSUMMER"

Oscar Lieber joined the expedition to Labrador as an assistant to Charles Scott Venable, who was then serving as professor of mathematics and astronomy at South Carolina College. During the trip, Lieber kept a detailed diary, which he later edited in the hope that he could have it published upon their return. Some of Lieber's hand-drawn illustrations from the diary and from the edited manuscript, which he titled "Winter in Midsummer or A Summer's Jaunt to Labrador," are pictured here.

While Lieber's official duties included helping Venable with astronomical observations, keeping a log of meteorological conditions, and undertaking geological work as his time allowed, he commented in his manuscript that the real reasons for his going were "to pass the summer in a cooler region than South Carolina ... to let my beard grow and obtain a fair start beyond the scrutinizing gaze of civilization ... and ... to colour a meerschaum pipe in a region, where the temptation offered by segars would not be likely to retard the operation."

On board the *Bibb*, Lieber made rough sketches of icebergs, the "high cliffs and ... bold rock islands" of the coast, native inhabitants of Labrador, and his traveling companions. After his return he finished the sketches and pasted the resulting illustrations onto pages of edited text from his journal.





ATTEMPT AT PUBLICATION

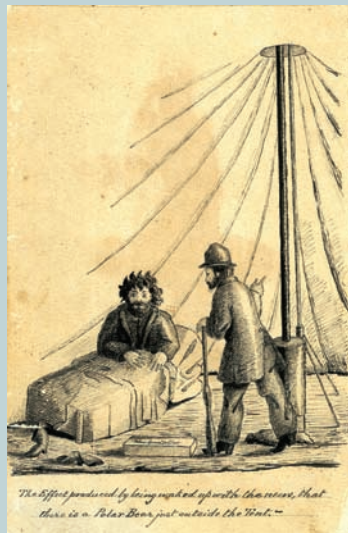
By October 1860, Lieber had begun to seek a publisher for his manuscript. After receiving word from his brother Norman that *Harper's Magazine* had declined to print the work, he wrote a letter to his parents that month in which he declared that "it is a great deal better than lots of trash, which they publish." He went on to insinuate that the quality of the manuscript was not the reason that the magazine declined to publish the piece. Instead he thought that sectional hostility between the North and the South was to blame—"nor can I conceive any other reason for their refusal than the fact that I mentioned in it casually, where I am from. It came in, in connection with tempera-
ture."

OVERWHELMED BY WAR

The secession of South Carolina from the United States in December 1860 marked the end of Lieber's attempt to publish "Winter in Midsummer." He enlisted in the Confederate army and witnessed the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861 while stationed at a battery on Morris Island.

The following year, after joining Hampton's Legion, Lieber was transferred to Virginia. He was critically wounded on May 7, 1862, at the Battle of Eltham's Landing while the legion was helping cover the Confederate retreat from Williamsburg, Va. Oscar Montgomery Lieber died on June 27 at a private house in Richmond and was buried in that city.

—Graham Duncan is a library specialist in the library's Manuscripts Division.



BILL SCHMIDT JOINS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES STAFF



Bill Schmidt

One of the most recent hires made at University Libraries is a face familiar to many: Dr. William (Bill) C. Schmidt Jr., a longtime member of the University South Caroliniana Society, Ex Libris Society, Friends of McKissick Museum, and Thomas Cooper Society and currently serving as a member of the Board of Trustees of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Schmidt brings to his job an impeccable background in libraries and technology, combining a Ph.D. in biophysics from the University of Virginia with longtime service as Webmaster at the South Carolina Budget and Control Board, from which he retired in February. His years of service to the state's major historical and cultural heritage societies made the idea of volunteering to work in University Libraries a natural choice, and he began work in April, helping to catalog oral histories for the Caroliniana.

"I've always had a passion for history," explained Schmidt, "ever since I helped my father restore an antique automobile as a boy." In fact, his interest in antique motor cars has been a constant in his life, leading him to research a wide variety of early models, especially those produced in South Carolina. But his interests encompass many aspects of his adopted state's history, from financial history to the use of reconnaissance balloons and submarines in the Civil War. Those interests are what drew him to the University Libraries. "I've always been fascinated by archives and libraries," Schmidt explained, "and I've come to know the Caroliniana, the Thomas Cooper, and McKissick Museum and appreciate their collections by working on a variety of research projects over the years."

That research acumen enabled him to tackle the logistical challenge of cataloging oral histories with élan, but his knowledge of the

broader range of challenges facing the libraries also made him a natural choice for assisting the University Libraries Office of Development. Starting September 21, he was hired full time, and he now assists Director of Development Carol Danner Benfield while continuing to help out at the Caroliniana.

"We are fortunate to have someone with such a highly skilled background who is also intimately familiar with our University Libraries," commented Allen Stokes, director of the Caroliniana. "Bill brings a wide professional experience and deep understanding of the mission of the libraries that make his assistance invaluable." Indeed, Schmidt's two terms of service on the University South Caroliniana Society's executive council and his decades of service to both state and national cultural heritage institutions provide him with a perspective that his colleagues already treasure. "We're lucky to be able to call on the skills of someone as accomplished and committed as Bill," Carol Benfield remarked. "In my work in development, we especially appreciate people's time and energy, and Bill is generous with both. We couldn't be more delighted to have him on board."



A certificate from one of Schmidt's collections of historical artifacts

NEW DIGITAL COLLECTIONS OF SCL MATERIALS

SPARTANBURG AT THE DAWN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

This collection includes *A Story of Spartan Push: The Greatest Cotton Manufacturing Centre in the South: Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Its Resources* by Edward P. McKissick and *Spartanburg, City and County, South Carolina: Their Wonderful Attractions and Marvelous Advantages as a Place of Settlement, and for the Profitable Investment of Capital* by the Spartanburg Board of Trade. The volume combines the first reprints of two early histories of the Upstate's second largest city, detailing Spartanburg's economic and cultural resources in the 1890s.

INVENTORY OF CHURCH ARCHIVES

A historical-records survey known as the Inventory of Church Archives was completed by Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) workers between 1937 and 1939. Survey sheets are available for 42

of South Carolina's 46 counties. Information that was systematically gathered about African American and white churches in both rural and urban areas included address, date organized, building description, construction date, and listings of any known church records.

THE CAROLINA STUDENT'S HANDBOOK

This handbook offers a glimpse of the campus culture at the University of South Carolina from the 1920s through the 1940s. Published annually by the University's YMCA and YWCA chapters, it was primarily designed for use by freshmen. It included information on the honor code, campus traditions, songs, organizations, and athletics. The handbook also urged students to shop at the local businesses that advertised in the handbook.

JAMES KERSHAW PAPERS, 1786–1822

This collection contains diaries of James Kershaw, the son of Joseph Kershaw, for whom Kershaw County is named. The family lived

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Title page and Piranesi's self-portrait



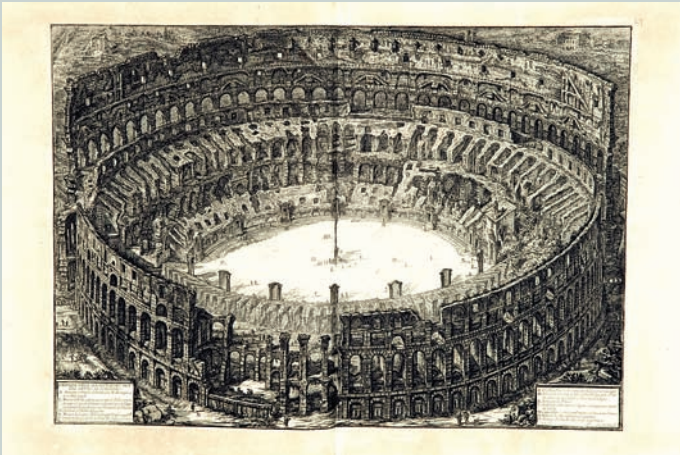
Piranesi

AT CAROLINA

BY CHARLES R. MACK

Although perhaps lacking the prestige of older institutions such as Harvard, Princeton, and Yale, South Carolina College (as the present University was originally known) was ranked among the premier institutions of higher learning in America during the first half of the 19th century.

Central to the college's position of academic leadership was its library. By 1850, the library of South Carolina College could boast a collection of 18,400 books—more volumes than in the libraries of Princeton, Columbia, or the University of Virginia and second in size only to that at Harvard. Its collections were described at the time as the most elegant assortment of books “ever brought to the United States.” Among those acquisitions was an outstanding edition of the graphic works of the great 18th-century archaeological and topographical printmaker Giambattista Piranesi (1720–1778). The Piranesi volumes remain one of the most important treasures owned by the University Libraries.



Top left: Basilica of Saint Peter and Saint Peter's Square
Bottom left: Colosseum

Top right: Trevi Fountain
Bottom right: Piazza Navona showing the Fountain of Neptune (foreground) and the Fountain of the Four Rivers

PIRANESI AND "THE GRANDEUR THAT WAS ROME"

Although a Venetian by birth, Piranesi is most often associated with the city of Rome. A sometime set designer and aspiring architect, Piranesi first came to Rome in 1740 and immediately fell in love with the city and its architectural reminders of ancient glory. Failing to achieve substantial commissions, he trained in the techniques of engraving and etching and, three years later, published his first series of prints, titled the *Prima parte di architettura e prospettive*. Soon thereafter came the celebrated edition of the *Carceri* (Prisons), which solidified his artistic reputation. However, it was the *vedute* (views) that provided his livelihood. In the pre-photography age of the 18th and early 19th centuries his many views were quickly integrated into various published guides or were sold in sets or as single sheets to crowds of tourists on the "Grand Tour."

Perhaps more than any other artist, it was Piranesi who was responsible for fixing the vanished glories of ancient Rome in the thoughts of successive generations of artists, writers, students, and poets. Blessed with a photographic memory, Piranesi made but limited use of preparatory drawings, preferring to work up his meticulously depicted images directly on the plate. This approach

endowed his productions, even the most prosaic of them, with a sense of immediacy lacking in the similar offerings of his competitors. Piranesi's best etchings are compositions of monumental scale, bathed in dramatic contrasts of light and shade and interpreted best as monochromatic paintings rather than common prints.

Despite Piranesi's archaeological intent, his visual records often deviate from the truly objective and tend to exaggerate or improve upon what he saw. The ruins often appear enlarged by the small scale of the human figures he introduced into the scenes. As these figures wander through the ancient ruins they also introduce a sense of contemplative melancholy into his scenes, a nostalgia for vanished glory and a somnambulist reflection upon the transitory nature of the human condition and the effects of time. Piranesi's Rome becomes, in effect, a *memento mori*. In these heroically scaled compositions, we are presented with a commentary on the smallness of the present as seen against the grandeur of the past.

PIRANESI AND MIDDLETON

Despite his overt documentary intent, Piranesi remains the romantic product of the late Baroque Era. A comparison of some of his plates with another series of Roman drawings now conserved in the



Trajan's Column



University's South Caroliniana Library is interesting. These drawings were executed by the Charleston artist John Izard Middleton in the early 1820s and reveal a new and more objective approach to documenting the past. (See *The Roman Remains: John Izard Middleton's Visual Souvenirs of 1820–1823*, eds. Charles R. Mack and Lynn Robertson, Columbia, USC Press, 1997.) Two plates from Piranesi's 11th volume of the Firmin-Didot edition, originally published in 1762, the "Entrance of the Tunnel" from the *Emissario del Lago Albano* and the "Tomb near Albano" from the *Antichità d'Albano*, should be compared with Middleton's views of the same subjects (*Roman Remains*, plates 29 and 31). Clearly, romance and mystery have yielded to topographical and archaeological accuracy. Sixty years had passed, and a new age had commenced, one that was more scientific in its vision but perhaps lacking a bit in inspiration.

THE LIBRARIES' PIRANESI

After Giambattista Piranesi's death in 1778, his son Francesco continued printing from the studio plates and actually added to his father's graphic projects. In 1799, Francesco took all of the original copper plates to Paris and there resumed printing editions of his father's work until his own death in 1810, when the plates and printing privileges passed to the Parisian publishing house of Firmin-Didot. Firmin-Didot continued to issue editions of Piranesi prints until 1839, when the plates were returned to Italy.

It was one of the last editions of the complete works of Piranesi produced in Paris by Firmin-Didot that South Carolina College acquired for its growing library in the late 1830s. The Firmin-Didot edition of the *Opere* is dated 1835–1837 and represents a reprise of Piranesi's most popular and significant copperplate productions, originally executed from 1748 to 1778, and posthumously (via his son, Francesco) to 1807. This compilation of Piranesi's "greatest hits" was first issued in 29 volumes but, in the University's version, had been condensed into 26 volumes, each of which is luxuriously bound in quarter calf with marbled boards in a 58 x 68 cm. format. The magnificent images were all printed from Piranesi's original engraved and etched plates, presenting subjects ranging from touristic views of Roman *piazze* to evocative images of archaeological ruins still mired in centuries of neglect to creative adaptations of classical ornamentation to those celebrated prison fantasies, called by Horace Walpole "the sublime dreams of Piranesi," which stimulated the architectural puzzles of M.C. Escher.

Certainly, when acquired, this edition of the works of Piranesi was regarded as a major addition to the college library. It attests to the ambitions of the pre-Civil War institution and to the importance attached at the time to the inspirational message found in the antique monuments so vividly documented and re-created by Piranesi. In the still youthful American republic, such testimonies to the glories of ancient Rome had an especial resonance.

—Art historian Charles Mack is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the University's Department of Art.

Editor's note: Illustrations for this article come from the 1835–37 edition of Opere di Giambasta Piranesi in the University Libraries' Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. They were photographed by Keith McGraw.

Trajan's Column (capital)



The South Carolina Statehouse
(Photo by Nancy Washington)

D.W. GRIFFITH'S "HISTORICAL FACSIMILE:"

HOW THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATEHOUSE BECAME A MOVIE SET

BY TERRY W. LIPSCOMB

In recent years, restored prints of D.W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation* have become widely available on DVD, and viewers may have noticed a scene set in the South Carolina Statehouse that is preceded by the following notice: "An historical facsimile of the State House of Representatives of South Carolina as it was in 1870. After photograph by *The Columbia State*."

The scene depicts the House in session in 1871—the year of the Ku Klux Klan insurrection—and it has been widely criticized for the racial stereotypes it contains. But despite Griffith's questionable content, his set design was carefully researched.

HISTORICAL ACCURACY ATTEMPTED

Birth of a Nation was an adaptation of Thomas Dixon's novel and play *The Clansman*. Dixon had accepted a 25 percent financial interest in exchange for the film rights, and he was helping Griffith research and promote the film. According to an account by S.L. Latimer Jr. found in Latimer's papers at the South Caroliniana Library, Dixon wrote Ambrose Gonzales, publisher of *The State* newspaper in Columbia, and told him about the project. He said that the production needed a Columbia contact to check material for accuracy and to supply the photographs that would be used in building the sets.

Dixon's choice of *The State* for research support was interesting to say the least. When the stage play *The Clansman* had toured

Columbia in 1905, the author and the newspaper had gotten into a controversy over historical accuracy that had turned into a nasty row. "Enthusiasm for the creature of his vivid imagination has caused Mr. Dixon to run away with himself," said *The State*. "His story of a 'gigantic conspiracy of lawless night raiders' which 'saved the south,' is not taken from a page of our history. It is a fairy tale."

Thus when Gonzales learned about the movie version sometime in early 1914, he did not want to turn down Dixon's request for aid, but he also did not want to get personally involved in the work. Happily, he had on the newspaper staff a young reporter named Sam Latimer who seemed perfect for the job. Latimer was a native of York, S.C., which under the fictional name of Piedmont was the setting of Dixon's story, and he had an avid interest in anything relating to the theater.

Latimer enlisted the services of Columbia photographer George V. Hennies, who shot the speaker's rostrum in the House chamber from thirteen different angles. The speaker's stand—together with much of the House chamber—was rebuilt on Griffith's Hollywood studio lot at 4500 Sunset Boulevard. Griffith's talented stage carpenter, Frank "Huck" Wortman, supervised the construction work. Then Griffith and his crew photographed the reconstruction and sent the pictures to Columbia so Latimer could double-check them. Like the "facsimile" of the Lincoln assassination, the Statehouse scene was an outdoor set lit by sunlight. In the finished film, the camera lingered on the empty chamber for a few moments before the legislators faded into view.

When *The Birth of a Nation* opened in Columbia on Nov. 22, 1915, *The State* made no attempt to resume its historical controversy with Dixon. "Griffith borrowed largely from Thomas Dixon's books ... in making his production," the paper noted, "but he dwarfed the Dixon novels and plays so thoroughly that there can be no comparison. It has also been stated by some reviewers that he tempered them considerably." Moreover, *The State* repeatedly called attention to the Statehouse scene re-created from photographs as an example of the film's authenticity.

HISTORICAL ACCURACY ACHIEVED?

But in fact how "historical" was Griffith's historical facsimile? There can be little doubt that the motion picture depicts the House chamber interior as it appeared in 1914 and as faithfully as Hollywood set designers of the period could achieve the feat. Even today the scene remains convincing.

On the other hand, there are nagging questions about the set's credibility from the perspective of 1871. The collapse of the Confederacy had halted construction of the Statehouse, and when the House chamber was first used in 1870, the building remained unfinished. But for a cheap tin roof temporarily installed above the ceiling, the real legislators of 1871 would have been nearly as exposed to the elements as were the Hollywood extras on the 1914 set.

The burning of the old Statehouse during Sherman's occupation had destroyed the antebellum furnishings. Revolutionary War battle scenes and other art works that hung in the legislative chambers had gone up in flames. In December 1876, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* published eyewitness sketches of the new House chamber

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near Pine Tree Hill, which was renamed Camden in 1768. In 1772, James was sent to England to live with his paternal grandfather and attend school. He returned to South Carolina in 1784, was twice married, and lived out his life as a planter in the region of his birth.

Included in the papers are meteorological observations; such natural phenomena as eclipses and earthquakes; recipes; home remedies (such as advice for treatment of pimples, boils, baldness, and unwanted hair); accounts of debts paid; prices of cotton, molasses, and sugar; and typed abstracts of recipes copied from the diaries.

Often called a meteorological journal because it was in these eight volumes that the plantation owner charted the weather with daily measured weather observations starting in 1791 and continuing into 1822, the notebooks also feature Kershaw's jottings on other events, each brief and without embellishment: "Killed 13 hogs." "Camden Races." "Kershaw Court opened Judge Grimké." "Review of lower Battallion." "Election—did not attend. Ague & fever took me." "Anniversary Orphan Society—Oration by Mr. Gill." "Declaration of war." The latter refers to the War of 1812. Kershaw made the notation on June 26, six days after the formal declaration was made in Washington, D.C.

The meteorological records are significant in that they represent one of the few surviving examples of measured observations from the early days of the republic. A decade and a half ago, they were micro-filmed for further study by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in its research into global warming.

by Harry Ogden, an artist who covered the assembly for the paper. No gallery of pictures lining the walls in the movie is visible in these scenes; instead the artist drew bare granite walls decorated only by curtains and gaslight fixtures. Even portions of the upstairs visitor's gallery seem to be absent.

However, in the case of the speaker's rostrum that was re-created in such loving detail, there is real continuity with the past. The film shows a stand that existed both in 1871 and in 1914.

While use of the 1914 chamber as a model for the interior design led to mixed results, use of Dixon's fiction as factual authority for the scene compromised its historical content. The film's racial caricatures have been too well publicized for them to be dealt with here. But Dixon also transposed historical events as part of his mythology of Reconstruction. One such anachronism that found its way into the film was the presence of a black speaker during the session of 1871. Samuel J. Lee, the first African American speaker in the state's history, was not sworn in until November 1872.

The Statehouse in *The Birth of a Nation* is a fine example of the qualities that have enthralled and infuriated critics of this landmark film for much of the past century. But moviegoers of 1915 who took the scene as literal re-creation of history were misled by the publicity campaign.

—Terry W. Lipscomb is a historian and author who has been associated with the South Carolina Department of Archives and History and the South Caroliniana Library for more than 35 years.

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Correspondence may be addressed to the editor at Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.